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COMPREHENSIVE VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR ADOLESCENT DELINQUENT BOYS--A FOLLOW-UP STUDY.

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THIS ARTICLE REPORTED A 2- AND 3-YEAR FOLLOWUP STUDY OF 20 DELINQUENT MALE DROPOUTS, HALF OF WHOM RECEIVED 10 MONTHS OF A COMPREHENSIVE, VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED PSYCHOTHERAPY PROGRAM, HALF OF WHOM DID NOT. METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TESTS AND THEMATIC STORIES WERE USED IN ASSESSMENTS. A SHORT INTERVIEW OBTAINED DATA ON JOB HISTORY, LEGAL AND MARITAL STATUS, AND EDUCATION SINCE THE END OF TREATMENT. THE BOYS WERE EVALUATED IN TERMS OF ACADEMIC LEARNING, SELF-IMAGE, CONTROL OF AGGRESSION, AND ATTITUDE TOWARD AUTHORITY. THE TREATED GROUP CONTINUED TO SHOW MAJOR IMPROVEMENT IN ALL AREAS OF EGO FUNCTIONING AS SEEN IN ACADEMIC LEARNING, PERSONALITY ATTITUDE, AND OVERT BEHAVIOR. IT APPEARED THAT THE RATE OF IMPROVEMENT TENDED TO DECREASE AFTER THE TERMINATION OF FORMAL PSYCHOTHERAPY. A SMALL MINORITY OF THE CONTROL GROUP BEGAN TO SHOW SOME IMPROVEMENT IN EGO FUNCTIONING. THIS WAS ATTRIBUTED TO THE PASSING OF ADOLESCENCE, WHICH MAY HAVE REDUCED SOME OF THE INTENSITY OF THEIR ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR. MOST OF THE UNTREATED BOYS DEMONSTRATED MARKED AND CONTINUED DETERIORATION OVER TIME. SOME WERE SERVING PRISON SENTENCES AS ADULT CRIMINALS. THE AUTHORS CONCLUDED THAT THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC APPROACH HAD BROUGHT ABOUT BASIC PERSONALITY CHANGES DURING THE TREATMENT PERIOD AND HELPED TO INITIATE A PROCESS WHEREBY THE DELINQUENT COULD CONTINUE ON HIS OWN IN GROWING AND ADAPTING TO THE WORLD. THIS ARTICLE IS A REPRINT FROM THE "AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ORTHOPSYCHIATRY," VOLUME 36, NUMBER 4, JULY 1966. (JH)

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COMPREHENSIVE VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR ADOLESCENT DELINQUENT BOYS: A FOLLOW-UP STUDY*

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A follow-up study of the adolescent delinquent boys participating in a new comprehensive, vocationally-oriented psychotherapy program reported earlier revealed that two to three years following termination the treated boys continued to show major improvement in ego functioning, though at a slower rate than during treatment. An untreated group deteriorated during that time. The results are of significance in planning programs of intervention, especially with lower socioeconomic groups.

IN 1963 THE AUTHORS reported the results of an experimental 10-month, comprehensive, vocationally oriented, psychotherapeutic program for adolescent delinquent boys who had left school.[1] It was found that there was significant improvement in many ego functions in a treated group when compared with a group that had not received treatment. Significant changes occurred in the treated group in academic areas (as measured by achievement tests in reading, vocabulary, arithmetic fundamentals and arithmetic problems), personality dimensions (self-image, control of aggression and attitude toward authority) and overt behavior (job history and legal status).§

However, in evaluating the effectiveness of any program an issue of major

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§ The theory and rationale underlying the treatment approach were described in the previous article.

Table 1

NUMBER AND TYPE OF THERAPIST'S CONTACTS WITH THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS FROM END OF EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD TO FOLLOW-UP TESTING

Boy No.	*Experimental Group*	*Boy No.*	*Control Group*
1.	None	1.	Seen once informally on street, talked, driven to garage where worked
2.	Numerous and continued contacts, seen at least once a week. Drops in frequently	2.	None
3.	None	3.	None
4.	Seen twice on the street, once to say "hello," other time with companion	4.	None
5.	Seen twice, once with friend, other to have therapist sign application for real estate broker permit	5.	None
6.	None	6.	None
7.	Seen once, had coffee with therapist	7.	None
8.	None	8.	None
9.	None	9.	None
10.	Seen five times casually and socially at service station where therapist's car was repaired.	10.	None

importance is not only what changes have been brought about during the treatment period, but also how effective is the program in effecting a change which could be maintained or continued after treatment had ceased. It is for that reason that in evaluating any psychotherapeutic program, follow-up studies become essential.

This paper reports a follow-up of the 20 boys (10 treated and 10 untreated) who were in the original study.

PROCEDURE

Contacts after Termination. The number and nature of the contacts by the therapist with the boys following treatment are shown in TABLE 1.* All the boys were told when the study began that it was an experimental program which would run about 10 months. However, they were told at termination that they were free to contact the therapist at any time if they felt he could be of any assistance. Although very few of the boys were seen after the 10-month period, and even then only socially, one of the 10 experimental boys maintained a long and intense contact with the therapist. (As might be expected, this boy was to become the most successful of the treated boys: he recently received an award for his superior performance in auto mechanics' school.)

Testing. The first five boys of each group (experimental and control) were retested two years after the program was completed; the second five three years later. At that time they were given the Metropolitan Achievement Tests Form T (Form R was used on first testing; Form U on second testing) in reading, vocabulary, arithmetic fundamentals and arithmetic problems. All the 15 pictures to which they originally had given thematic stories were repeated. Information regarding job history, legal and marital status and education was obtained in a

* The numbers on the tables for the control and experimental subjects in the original study and this follow-up study are the same so that comparisons of contacts, work histories and legal status can be made if desired.

short interview. The follow-up testing was done by a person different from the one who administered the tests on the two previous occasions. As with the previous examiner, this examiner was not aware of the group to which any of the boys belonged when testing was done.

Rating. The ratings of improvement on the thematic stories were done by the same experienced clinical psychologist who had done the ratings in the original study and who was involved neither in the treatment nor in the testing. As with the original study, the stories were coded, randomly paired, and each pair randomized for all the boys so that no two successive pairs of stories came from the same boy. The original rating guide for judging the stories was used by the rater, who was asked to state, as previously, whether the second story of the pair was worse, better or not different in quality from the first story.* In order to clarify the direction of change, two sets of judgments were made: (1) a comparison of the stories obtained on termination of treatment with those on follow-up and (2) a comparison of those stories obtained before treatment with those on follow-up.†

RESULTS

Academic Learning. TABLE 2 shows the t tests of the changes in the standard scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Tests in the two groups for the three conditions. It is clear that the treated group continued to improve after treatment in all academic areas. The greatest improvement is shown in reading, the least in arithmetic problems. However, as one might expect, the rate of change seems to be slower than when the boys were actively involved in treatment. The average grade level achieved on follow-up by the boys in the treated group was 5.7; of the untreated group, 3.7. The untreated group showed some deterioration in their academic functioning over the two- to three-year period. However, analysis of this decline showed that it was not large enough to suggest that the differences revealed might result

* As in the original study, because of the directional nature of the hypothesis, all ratings of "no change" were considered as deterioration. It was assumed in the follow-up study that for treatment to be effective, improvement should continue after termination.

† Two of the boys refused follow-up testing. It was the rater's belief that such a refusal by adolescent delinquents was evidence of deterioration over previous testing, where a certain degree of cooperation, even if minimal, was shown. Therefor, refusal to give thematic stories automatically was scored as deterioration from previous testing. These boys were not included in the evaluation of achievement test changes at follow-up.

Table 2

T TEST RESULTS OF THE DIFFERENCE SCORES FOR THE TWO GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TESTS FOR THE THREE CONDITIONS

	Pre and Posttest	*Pretest and Follow-up*	*Posttest and Follow-up*
Reading	4.47**	5.29**	3.55**
Vocabulary	7.88**	5.29**	2.78*
Arithmetic Fundamentals	6.65**	4.84**	2.81*
Arithmetic Problems	7.74**	3.42**	1.27

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

Table 3
CHI-SQUARE RESULTS ON RATINGS FOR SELF-IMAGE, CONTROL OF AGGRESSION AND ATTITUDE TOWARD AUTHORITY FOR THE THREE CONDITIONS

Comparisons	*Self-Image*	*Control of Aggression*	*Attitude Toward Authority*
Before Treatment with After Treatment	7.27***	5.00**	3.28*
After Treatment with Follow-up	7.03***	5.00**	3.52*
Before Treatment with Follow-up	7.03***	5.21**	5.00**

* p 10>.05.
** p<.05.
*** p<.01.

from either an increase in resistance, a reduction in motivation, or a lack of cooperation on the part of the untreated delinquent boys. Instead, it was the degree of increase in the performance of the treated group that primarily determined the differences between the groups. Since the performance on achievement tests at the start of treatment was not different in the treated and untreated groups (the boys were randomly selected for the two groups), these changes in achievement must be directly related to constructive forces that were initiated by treatment and continued after treatment was terminated.

Personality Functions. The results of the ratings of the thematic stories are shown in TABLE 3. The treated group continues to show very significant improvement in the three personality dimensions of self-image, control of aggression and attitude toward authority. Although attitude toward authority changed at a less significant rate than the other two areas, a comparison of stories given before treatment with follow-up shows that the overall change over a long period of time was toward significant improvement in attitude toward authority.

Of great interest is that comparison of the follow-up stories with those given immediately after treatment indicated the same course of change as in the before and after treatment comparisons. That is, self-image changed most, control of aggression next, and attitude toward authority least. No boy showed a change in control of aggression who had not first changed in self-image, and no changes were shown in attitude toward authority unless there were changes in the other two areas.

Overt Behavior. As in the original study, the data on work histories and legal status are shown descriptively (TABLE 4).

The results reveal that one of the treated boys had been hospitalized as psychotic, and one treated boy was unemployed at follow-up. Five of the 10 treated boys had continued some formal education, although only two returned to public school. Only two of the untreated boys continued in some sort of formal education. Of interest is that these two boys were the only ones in the control group to show some improvement in both academic performance and in the personality dimensions. There is no evidence that either boy had received any form of psychotherapy during this period. Two of the untreated boys were serving prison sentences at the time of follow-up (a third was sentenced after

follow-up testing). It is clear that most of the treated group were able to maintain and expand their productive activities over the period of time following treatment.

DISCUSSION

Analyses of the changes brought about by vocationally oriented psychotherapy [2, 3, 4, 5] had suggested that the alterations in personality structure during treatment were profound and probably could be maintained after psychotherapy had ceased. The results of the follow-up study confirm this belief. The treated group continued to improve in all areas of functioning after treatment was discontinued.

The question remains, however, as to what features of the program were most significant in bringing about the major changes in ego functioning. Was it the concrete vocational focus of the program which offered realistic tasks around which other services were available and which permitted the development of specific solutions, a possible model for handling future situations? Was it the focus on the boy's independence and initiative which permitted him to develop his own resources in an appropriate way, yet to have the therapist's sup-

Table 4

JOB HISTORY AND LEGAL STATUS AS REPORTED ON FOLLOW-UP TESTING *

Boy No.	*No. of Jobs Since End of Rx Period*	*Present Position*	*Pay*	*Formal Schooling and Training Since End of Treatment Period*	*Legal Status and Miscellaneous Comments*
Experimental					
1	2	Tester with an Electronics Firm	$1.75	....	No arrests. Married, no children.
2	3	Auto Body Mechanic	3.50	General Motors Auto Body Sch.	One arrest—driving under the influence. Single.
3	2	Army Infantry	....	....	No arrests. Single.
4	1	Works for City Park Commission	2.00	....	No arrests. Married, one child.
5	1	Gas Station (night)	1.50	Return to school, will graduate 6/66	No arrests. Married, one child.
6	5	Assembly line of transister firm	1.65	....	No arrests. Institutionalized in state hosp. '62–'63 (psychotic). Single.
7	3	Unemployed	....	....	One arrest—speeding. Single.
8	3	Draftsman	2.10	Drafting School	No arrests. Married, no children.
9	1	Mechanic Assistant	1.75	Returned to school, Grad. 6/65	No arrests. Single.
10	1	Mechanic	2.50	Correspondence course—State Education Department	No arrests. Married, no children.

* Boys numbered one to five in each group were seen two years after termination; boys five through ten three years after termination.

Table 4—Continued

Boy No.	*No. of Jobs Since End of Rx Period*	*Present Position*	*Pay*	*Formal Schooling and Training Since End of Treatment Period*	*Legal Status and Miscellaneous Comments*
Control					
1	2	Truck Driver	1.50	....	No arrests. Married, no children.
2	4	Army	....	....	One arrest (car theft). On probation. Single.
3	3	Unemployed (cook)	....	....	No arrests. Single.
4	2	Clerk	1.35	Night school	No arrests. Married, no children.
5	4	Unemployed Handyman	....	....	Serving 2 yr. sentence for grand larceny. Single.
6	5	Assembly line	1.65	....	One arrest for disorderly conduct. Single.
7	4	Unemployed (car wash)	....	....	Three arrests—driving under the influence, speeding, breaking and entering. On probation. Single.
8	3	Mechanic	2.00	Correspondence Course	No arrests. Single.
9	Unknown	Unemployed	....	....	Serving 5–10 yrs. in state penitentiary for manslaughter. Single.
10	6	Gas Station Attendant	1.50	....	Two arrests—car theft and disorderly conduct. On probation. Discharged from Service dishonorably. Single.

port when necessary? Was it the focus on the development of an adequate self-image through success and mastery, self-image changes being shown to be a prerequisite for change in the other dimensions of control of aggression and attitude toward authority?

The results also suggest that some boys are able to recover without assistance from a delinquent adolescence which has led to leaving school. This recovery may result from the reduction of the pressure and tension of the adolescent period. However, the group that recovers is a small minority; most of the boys who had not received help went on to an unproductive life, often with adult criminal behavior.

What is the relevance of this special psychotherapeutic program to other programs dealing with juvenile delinquency? It must be remembered that this special program was undertaken in a suburban neighborhood where there were many job opportunities, where the schools and community were interested in social problems and where the causes of delinquency resulted more from individual psychopathology than from general social disorganization. But the results certainly suggest that any program geared to bringing about personality

change in hard-core delinquents will have to incorporate some of the highly flexible and individualistic features of comprehensive, vocationally oriented psychotherapy.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A follow-up study two and three years after treatment was terminated of boys participating in a special comprehensive, vocationally oriented psychotherapeutic program revealed that major improvements in ego functioning continued in all areas—academic learning, personality attitude and overt behavior. However, the *rate* of improvement seemed to decrease after formal psychotherapy had stopped. In the untreated group, the passing of adolescence tended to reduce some of the intensity of the antisocial behavior so that a small minority of the boys began to show some improvement in ego functioning. The great majority of the untreated boys, however, showed marked and continued deterioration over a long period of time; some served prison sentences as adult criminals. It is clear that the innovative psychotherapeutic approach based on recent theoretical developments in the treatment of chronic delinquents of adolescent age, especially those in lower socioeconomic groups, not only brought about basic personality changes during the treatment period, but also initiated a process whereby the individual on his own could continue to grow and improve in his adaptation to the world.

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